September 15, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David C. Potter
                   Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Recording Latitude and Longitude

The following are examples of the two different ways latitude and longitude may be displayed on GPS units:

    41° 31.5'   = in 10^{ths} (.1) of a minute (DD MM.M)
    41° 31' 30''   = in seconds (DD MM SS)

Note that the above positions are the same (.5 of a minute = 30 seconds).

You are asked to record position data using the first format (10^{ths} of a minute) and we assume that is what you are doing. If the GPS unit is displaying position data using the Degrees, Minutes, Seconds format (DD MM SS) please convert them to the 10^{ths} of a minute format using Appendix Q in your Program Manual.

It is fairly easy to tell which format is being used. The first format uses a decimal point and only the minute symbol while the second **doesn't** use a decimal point but uses the minute **and** second symbols. Please be sure to use all symbols or decimal points as they are displayed, when recording position data. This will eliminate confusion when your data are being edited.

Thank you.

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